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793 All priests are subject to certain *fady* ("prohibitions" or "rules of conduct") which usually extend to their families as well. The commonest of these seems to be a prohibition on eating pork.

791 ORDEALS AND THE ANCESTOR CULT.—Native medicine-men or magicians, called *ombiasy*, have been described elsewhere (see section on *Ombiasy*) and only their activities in connection with the ancestor cult will be described here. They are practitioners of divination and magic and are sharply distinguished from the priests, who do not work with either. Throughout most of Madagascar the same person may not hold both offices and if an *ombiasy* inherits a priesthood, he must give up his magical paraphernalia and practices at once. At the same time, there is no hostility between the two groups and they are not considered rivals. The *ombiasy* are thought to be more skilled than the priests in everything pertaining to the supernatural and the priests constantly consult them as to the best means for propitiating the ancestors.

791 769 796 *Ombiasy* frequently instigate sacrifices, announcing that illness or calamity is due to offended ancestral spirits, or that the spirit of so-and-so has appeared to them and demanded an offering from some one of his descendants. They are always consulted as to the most propitious time and place for communal sacrifices and for individual sacrifices as well, if the sacrificer is rich enough to pay for their services. Among the Tanala they also act as stage managers in the more important sacrifices. This results in great variation in minor details of ceremonial procedure for, although the general pattern is always the same, the *ombiasy* is expected to change some detail each time. If he fails to do this, there seems to be a feeling of disappointment and a tendency to doubt his ability. In general, only *ombiasy* belonging to the *gens* are allowed to manage sacrifices, for outsiders will not be familiar with the usual ritual of the group, or with the names of its ancestors. However, if a foreign *ombiasy* of great reputation is present, he may be asked to take charge. He consults with the priest and, when the time comes to say the invocation, stands beside him and repeats the invocation with him, the priest speaking in a low voice and the *ombiasy* in a loud one. Minor priests, or those who feel uncertain of their own ability, may delegate their office to the *ombiasy* of their village, who thenceforth both direct and perform all sacrifices. The arrangement is temporary and the office reverts to the priest's family at his death.

The Tanala appear to be the only tribe in which it is permissible for an *ombiasy* to sacrifice to the ancestors, except in his own behalf

or for his immediate family. The Inverita may have been an exception to this rule, but accounts of the early conditions there are vague and conflicting. Elsewhere, priests cannot delegate their functions to ordinary even temporarily. Among the western tribes, where the distinction between the two offices is most rigid, ordinary may not even direct sacrifices.

SACRIFICES ON BEHALF OF THE GENS.—Among the Mendo, sacrifices on behalf of the entire gens were made only in time of national calamity, such as pestilence, very serious crop failure, or an attack which threatened to drive the gens from its territory or subjugate it. They were performed on the tops of sacred mountains, the idea being that the worshippers were thus lifted closer to heaven and their prayers made more easily audible to the gods and ancestors. Each gens had one or more of these mountains within its territory. The Zuliaberry had three, which were the sites of three of their ancient villages, later abandoned. I could not learn whether the sacred mountains of other gentes had ever been inhabited. At present it is not taboo to visit the mountains or even to cultivate their lower slopes, but the summits are shunned as the abode of spirits. These high places are not marked by memorial stones or other permanent altars. A temporary wooden altar (see Sacrifices on Behalf of Individuals) was erected for the ceremony.

When there was more than one sacred mountain, the leading ordinary of the gens, or some foreign ordinary of great power, indicated which one should be used. He also selected the priest who was to officiate from among all those in the gens and indicated the ritual to be used, especially whether the sacrifice was to be boiled or grilled. The ritual was the same as for individual sacrifices. Apparently no sacrifices on behalf of a gens have been performed in recent times.

Sacrifices on behalf of a village or group of villages were performed before setting out on a war party. These have been described in the section on Warfare. They may have been performed on a few other occasions as well, but informants were uncertain. Since the establishment of French control they also have become obsolete.

SACRIFICES ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS.—Sacrifices of this type are the commonest of all Tamala ceremonies. Although they are always made on behalf of some individual, the larger and more important ones are participated in by the entire village and are felt to be a reassertion of the close relation existing between the living and the souls of their ancestors. They may be performed during

of each with a sharp knife. Each man takes a piece of raw ginger root and smears it with his own blood. They face each other and each covers the other's eyes with his left hand while he places the ginger root in the other's mouth with his right. They do this simultaneously, repeating together: "May you also become blind if you are a traitor to me." The *ombiasy* then takes a leaf of the *longoja* plant and pulls it into two pieces lengthwise, saying: "If either of you is a traitor, may his body be torn in two like this leaf, so that one part will be on the east coast of this island and the other on the west." Half the leaf is laid on the eastern and half on the western side of the house. Then the oath brothers pay the *ombiasy* and witnesses, and name and point out to each other the members of their families.

The above account was obtained from Ratsimisiko, an *ombiasy* of the Zafindramoraso gens of the Tanala Menabe, and is a description of a particular ceremony which he had himself directed. Accounts obtained from other *ombiasy* indicate that each one has his own formula, although all of these conform to a definite pattern. The use of the rice winnower, grasping of the spear, tapping with the knife, invocation first of the gods and then of the ancestors, and the eating of ginger root smeared with each other's blood, are constant. The materials mixed in the rice winnower, the terms of the contract and the blessings and imprecations are variable. One set of imprecations is as follows: 1. May illness come and slay the traitor. 2. May his liver become diseased and be covered with spots. 3 and 4. Same as in imprecations previously given. 5. May the sickness turn and turn in him, i.e., may it be constantly active and attack all organs. 6. May the malady enter him six times a day. 7. May his gall bladder burst. 8. May the illness, when it comes, kill him before he can drink water, i.e., instantly. 9. May sickness spread through his whole body. 10. May all his limbs be broken.

When a village was captured and reduced to vassalage the heads of the lineages and more important families were required to take an oath of loyalty to the victors. This was identical in content and procedure with the oath of blood brotherhood except that the victors remained unbound. The natives knew of no instance in which the chiefs of two gentes had entered into blood brotherhood to cement an alliance between their followers.

OLD AGE

Although no vital statistics are available for the Tanala, the life expectation for adults seems to be little if at all inferior to that